

Vernon Purbaugh. While Matthew does not reside in my district, he and I share a great love of the English language and a great respect of words in general.

Matthew Purbaugh is an amateur published poet; his poem "Noon" appeared in the International Society of Poets' 2006 edition. He was awarded "Outstanding Achievement in Poetry" and Best Amateur Poet. Matthew was recently invited to submit a new work for "Who's Who in American Poetry."

I share his poem "Words" with you today.

WORDS

What is it in a word

That

Can Stir the heart of men

To bring them to do great and

Courageous deeds?

What is it about words.

That,

Let them have the power

To topple empires of stone and steel?

What is it about words,

That,

Let them have the power

To topple empires of stone and steel?

What is it about words,

That

Let them go deeper than the strongest bullet?

What is it about words,

That

Let them hold sway over men

More than their fate

More than the point of a gun?

What is in words?

That

Lets something we have created

Hold sway over us, more than,

Our deepest fears?

And our greatest, Driving Desires?

HONORING DR. MUHAMMAD YUNUS
NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNER 2006

HON. TOM DAVIS

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 15, 2006

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Muhammad Yunus of Bangladesh, winner of the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize.

Dr. Yunus is a visionary in the effort to improve the economies of the developing world. He first began his revolutionary work in 1974 during a widespread famine in his native Bangladesh. Then an economics professor at Chittagong University, Dr. Yunus began experimenting with different ways to help the poor. He struck upon the concept of microcredit, the provision of very small loans to poor individuals to start or improve basic businesses.

Although desperately poor, those to whom Dr. Yunus lent money proved to be dependable clients and could be relied upon to repay their debts. When local banks declined to make small loans of this sort, Dr. Yunus founded the Grameen Bank in order to do it himself. To date, the Grameen Bank has disbursed more than \$5.3 billion to nearly seven million borrowers, most of whom have no collateral.

Dr. Yunus' objective is to rid the world of poverty, and his microcredit concept has indeed showed promising results. Roughly half of Dr. Yunus' clients have achieved basic eco-

nomic objectives: a home with a metal roof; clean drinking water; a sanitary latrine; warm clothes for winter and mosquito netting for summer; about seventy-five dollars in a savings account; and schooling for the children. Upon this foundation, one can envision a world in which the scourge of poverty is banished.

Dr. Yunus' achievements have long been praised; it is fitting that he has finally received the high honor of the Nobel Prize. I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating Dr. Yunus on this occasion.

DIVESTMENT FROM SUDAN

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 15, 2006

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I want to share with our colleagues my statement from a press conference I hosted with Congressman DONALD PAYNE, and the Genocide Intervention Network today calling on all state Governors to divest from companies doing business in Sudan. Local students from Langley High School and Westfield High School also participated, and I would like to commend them for being so active on this issue.

Thank you all for coming. Today I join my good friend and congressional colleague Donald Payne in calling on all states to divest from companies doing business in Sudan. I want to especially thank the Sudan Divestment Taskforce and the Genocide Intervention Network for working so hard on this issue. This movement started at UCLA and Swarthmore College and has gained recognition over the last 2 years. I also would like to thank all of the students in attendance. So many young people are embracing this issue. I commend them and urge them to remain vigilant.

For over 20 years the government of Sudan engaged in a brutal civil war with the people of southern Sudan. This conflict took the lives of over 2 million people. During this time slavery flourished and terrorism took root in Sudan. In 2003 a conflict in Sudan's Darfur region broke out. The government reacted by unleashing a war on innocent people and began the genocide. That was 3 years ago. Over 400,000 people have died since and over 2 million continue to be at risk.

I led the first congressional delegation to Darfur. I witnessed the horror these people live with day to day and the impact of decades of war. Just last week the United Nations reported fresh ongoing attacks. There is no question that the government of Sudan orchestrated and continues to direct the genocide in Darfur. In one village, 27 of the people that were killed were children under the age of 12. The United Nations is working to try to get desperately needed U.N. troops on the ground but the government of Sudan continues to reject this deployment.

Targeted divestment from companies doing business in Sudan is an action that can make a difference. The genocide in Sudan can be stopped. Every American can do his or her part. The United States Congress and the president have called it genocide. It is now up to the states to apply economic pressure on the government of Sudan and divest from companies doing business in Sudan. We have seen in the past that the government in Khartoum responds to economic pressure.

Last month I called on my home state of Virginia to divest and a state senator will be

putting forth legislation when the General Assembly returns in January. I hope every state will follow the lead of California, Connecticut, Illinois, Maine, New Jersey and Oregon which have already moved to divest from companies doing business with Sudan. Today we call on the remaining 44 states to do the same.

We encourage all governors to review their state's pension funds and identify companies which are doing the type of business in Sudan that is aiding the government and fulfilling this genocide, not helping the people. We ask that they work with their state legislators to enact legislation to divest from those companies.

California just passed a law last month and its model of targeted divestment limits the scope of companies and investments, providing a good plan for action. We need to send a signal to the government in Khartoum that America and the West will not stand silent in the face of genocide—that the women and children in those camps matter as much to us as our own families.

History will judge our willingness to act.

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL SPINA BIFIDA AWARENESS MONTH

HON. BART STUPAK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 15, 2006

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the more than 70,000 people in the United States currently living with Spina Bifida, the most common permanently disabling birth defect. Each October we recognize these Americans during National Spina Bifida Awareness Month and recognize the importance to work year round to advance research, programs, and policies to meet the needs of this important community.

National Spina Bifida Awareness Month is sponsored by the Spina Bifida Association (SBA), which for more than 30 years has helped those living with and affected by this debilitating birth defect. As co-chair of the Congressional Spina Bifida Caucus, I've had the honor to work with my co-chair, Representative CHRIS SMITH, and SBA to advance Spina Bifida awareness, research, and public health efforts in Congress. Founded in 1973, SBA is the Nation's only organization solely dedicated to advocating on behalf of the Spina Bifida community. Through its nearly 60 chapters in more than 125 communities, the SBA brings expectant parents together with those who have a child with Spina Bifida. This interaction helps to answer questions and concerns, but most importantly it lends much needed support and provides hope and inspiration.

Mr. Speaker, Spina Bifida is a birth defect that can happen to anyone. It is a neural tube defect that occurs in the first month of pregnancy when the spinal column does not close completely. Everyday, an average of eight babies are affected by Spina Bifida and approximately 3,000 pregnancies are affected by this birth defect each year. We do not know the exact cause of it, but research found that if a woman takes 400 mcg of folic acid every day before she becomes pregnant, she reduces her risk of having a baby with Spina Bifida or another neural tube defect by as much as 70 percent.

No two cases of Spina Bifida are ever the same. While Spina Bifida typically causes a

host of physical, psychosocial, educational, and vocational challenges, approximately 90 percent of all babies diagnosed with Spina Bifida live into adulthood, approximately 80 percent have normal IQ's, and approximately 75 percent participate in sports and other recreational activities. With access to appropriate and comprehensive care, people with Spina Bifida can live productive and fulfilling lives. The National Spina Bifida Program—which I helped to create with Representative CHRIS SMITH—plays a critical role in improving the quality of life for people with Spina Bifida. I am hopeful that the House allocation of \$6 million for the program in FY 2007 will be maintained in the final FY 2007 Labor-Health and Human Services-Education bill and thank my colleagues in advance for helping to ensure this important funding is provided.

I thank the SBA for its partnership and its commitment to ensuring that we are doing all that we can to reduce and prevent suffering from Spina Bifida and I congratulate the SBA on the occasion of its 18th annual Roast that took place on October 3rd. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the SBA of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan for working tirelessly to help the families of those living with Spina Bifida meet the challenges and enjoy the rewards of raising their children.

REMEMBERING THE TRAGEDY OF FLIGHT 587 ON THE FIFTH ANNI- VERSARY OF THE FATAL CRASH

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 15, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the lives of the 265 people who lost their lives on November 12, 2001 when American Airlines Flight 587 crashed into Belle Harbor in Queens, NY.

November 12 will always be a solemn day in hearts of many, including my own. On that fateful day, when the American Airlines Flight 587 crashed into Belle Harbor Queens and killed 260 passengers and 5 residents, it changed the lives of not just their families, but also multiple communities here and in the Dominican Republic.

There is no rhyme or reason to such events. No amount of time or information will ever answer why it happened. Just two months after the tragedy of Sept. 11, the crash reminded us all of how fragile our lives are and how precious are the moments we share daily with our loved ones.

Leaders and government officials on every level of government have tried to do their best to ease the grief of the families and bring some sense of closure to this tragedy. We have organized economic and social resources for relatives, pressed the NTSB to conduct a thorough investigation, and urged American Airlines to do what is right when settling with families.

There are, of course, still some outstanding issues. Yet today, after a lot of hard work, we will see the unveiling of a memorial that is more than a reminder of an unexplained tragedy, but a beautiful testament to how they lived.

They were like millions of dreamers who come to this land, strapped with hopes for a better life for themselves and their children. These immigrants bring a dynamic energy to this land, achievements that can be seen in every part of society. Yet no matter how successful they are here, no matter how grateful they are to their American opportunities, part of their soul still remain in their homelands.

For thousands of Dominicans, that first flight of the morning—or any flight back to the Dominican—is what they dream about when they are pulling the long hours, working multiple jobs and stretching their paychecks to survive in this city. It is more than their reward for a job well done. It is their chance to enjoy a home cooked meal by midday with those they hadn't seen for months or years. It is their chance to feel complete again—if only for just a couple of days.

It is not easy, but it is a sacrifice that many do daily.

And so, while there is much to be sad about today, we can all take comfort that this memorial will always serve as a reminder of the beauty and strength of the Dominican people. A reminder that the families of Flight 587 have not been crushed by the weight of this devastating tragedy or the adversity that has followed.

A reminder that the spirit of a community did not die that day, but instead, continues to grow and inspire others.

TROOPS TO TEACHERS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2006

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 15, 2006

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, today, my colleague, Mr. PETRI, and I introduced the Troops to Teachers Improvement Act of 2006. I am proud to bring this bipartisan effort before the House. I first learned about the Troops to Teachers program at a California Purple Heart Veterans Day event in my district. Two different veterans who are participating in the Troops to Teachers program spoke with me about the program and how it had offered them the chance to continue to contribute to our country. After serving their country in the Armed Forces, they were now able to teach in high-need school districts.

With a slogan like, "Proud To Serve Again," Troops to Teachers is a unique program that provides stipends to military retirees to obtain the necessary certification for a second career in teaching. Equally important, the program places much needed math, science and special education teachers in the classroom. In fact, over 46 percent of Troops to Teachers participants teach science, a significant improvement over the national average of 18 percent. Additionally, veterans who participate in the Troops to Teachers program fill another void for male and ethnic minority teachers. Right now, our country is seeing 7 percent of the Nation's teaching force leave every year, and we have a need for highly qualified science and math teachers. Simply put, the Troops to Teachers program has never been more important.

First authorized in 1993, the program was designed to help members of the military obtain teaching credentials to teach in large districts with low-income schools. A variety of retired, separated, active duty and transitioning military members and veterans—including disabled veterans—are eligible to participate. Those who are interested are required to have a bachelor's or advanced degree, or if applying for a vocational or technical teaching position, are required to have at least 6 years of experience in the field. The program has successfully recruited and placed almost 10,000 veterans in school districts since then. In my home State of California, 571 veterans are currently participating in the program.

Unfortunately, a small change under the No Child Left Behind Act, NCLB, of 2001 greatly affected where veterans could teach to fulfill their stipend. In some areas of the country, retiring military and veterans interested in the program now have to drive 50 to 100 miles to find an eligible school. This has resulted in a 20–30 percent drop-off in veteran participation, which has seriously hindered this productive and necessary program.

The bill that my esteemed colleague Mr. PETRI and I are introducing today would fix this error. The bill would allow participants to fulfill their teaching obligation at any school that receives title I funding, and is therefore, considered a high-need school. Prior to the NCLB change, participants were able to fulfill their teaching obligation in any school within my district in Sacramento, as they all receive title I funding. However, under the more restrictive rule, only 211 of the 350 schools in my district are eligible. Currently, 61 percent of the high schools in my district are not eligible.

I believe in this program and want to see disabled and retiring military have a second chance at serving our country. Recently, the Disabled American Veterans magazine published a story about William Mimigia, a retired Marine Corps major who proudly served in our military for 31 years. Now a middle school special education teacher, Mr. Mimigia was recently named the 2006 Middle School Teacher of the Year by the California Troops to Teachers program. In the article, he is quoted as saying, "I served with good people who sacrificed so much for our country. I promised myself I would find a way to help them some day. What better way than to help their kids and the kids some of them would never have a chance to have? Teaching lets me do that."

Mr. Mimigia's dedication to serving our country and contributing to future generations is honorable. This program offers our returning veterans an opportunity for them to feel the same sense of fulfillment that Mr. Mimigia expressed. Troops to Teachers brings important math, science, and foreign language expertise to our classroom and fills a critical need among our educators. These characteristics make Troops to Teachers an excellent source of highly qualified educators and my colleague and I bring this bill before the House today to ensure that others can continue to serve our country—whether in the military or in the classroom. I hope that we can work swiftly on this bipartisan bill to do just that, and will continue to support the ideals behind the Troops to Teachers program in the 110th Congress.